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SOME REMINISCENCES OF STERNBERG HOSPITAL

By MRS. H. C. LOUNSBERY

Chief Nurse

(Concluded from page 5)

WHEN Miss Maxwell left the hospital she gave over to me several hundred dollars which had been sent her by friends, with instructions to spend it for luxuries for the sick soldiers. Most of it went for ice-cream, which was eagerly devoured by the patients. I recall some very funny things as I think of the sick soldiers and their *diets*. The doctor, while making "rounds" one morning, said to the nurse, "Miss —, this man may have chicken-soup to-morrow if his temperature keeps down to normal." This was said in the patient's hearing, and Miss — made a note of the instructions and passed on. The very next day there was a great "peep-peep-ing" heard under this man's bed. Upon investigation it was found that he had a dozen tiny chicks there in a box. The patient explained that the doctor had said he could have chicken-soup. A darky had come through the ward with these chicks and had sold them to this poor fellow for four dollars. "But," said the nurse, "these are too little to cook." "Well—yes," said the man, "but they'll grow, and I reckoned the boys would bring me crumbs to feed 'em." Imagine bringing up chickens under a typhoid-fever patient's bed! The case was brought to me. I bought the chicks and gave the man his four dollars, and sent him some canned chicken-soup; but I always thought he felt aggrieved that I did not allow him to maintain his private poultry-yard.

The home gifts the soldiers most enjoyed were the "housewives" that came with every box—sometimes two or three dozen in a box. No two lots were identical, though they all contained needles, thread, and buttons. As they were given out, it was a matter of much speculation as to just what "extras" would be found. They were keenly appreciated,

and one could hear the comments on all sides as the strings which bound them were untied and the contents examined. "Say, Tennessee," one would call, "what have you got in yours? I got a knife in mine and—postal cards." "Well, Kentucky," would be the reply, "I ain't got no knife in mine, but I got paper, envelopes, and—*stamps*, by cracky! and here's scissors." These extras delighted the men and were loaned or exchanged endlessly. It was always interesting to hear the soldiers talk to one another, and they invariably were called by the name of the State from which they came. No one who was at Sternberg will ever forget "Oklahoma Bill," who drove the water-cart.

It is very amusing to remember how ignorant we all were of army ways when we first went into camp. I think I am right in saying we all were influenced by the purest patriotism in going. I know it seemed to me a wonderful thing that my country really needed me, and I joyfully went, anxious only to help. I knew nothing of the best way of getting into army work. As I happened to be in Washington, I went to Dr. McGee's office—sent there by some friends. I was told by others that I would only waste time going there, but I went and offered my services, and, of course, signed the contract and was sent off. The contracts came for the nurses a few days after I had arrived in camp. Most of the nurses had come from the North and Northwest, and had never heard of any contracts. They did not know why they should sign such elaborate papers. They had come to nurse the soldiers, they were doing their best, and were very successful,—why, then, this (seemingly) useless palaver? It took all of Miss Maxwell's eloquence, backed by Miss Stone's and mine, to make them feel that they were not binding themselves over to something intangible or dreadful. At last they grasped the idea that the contract only meant that the government wished them to be regularly recognized as a part of the army, and most of them signed.

The thought that upon their conduct and efficiency then and there would be based the action of Congress as to whether women should or should not be regularly employed as army nurses, be looked upon as part of the army hospital equipment, was urged upon them again and again, and most of them seemed to feel this responsibility and governed themselves accordingly.

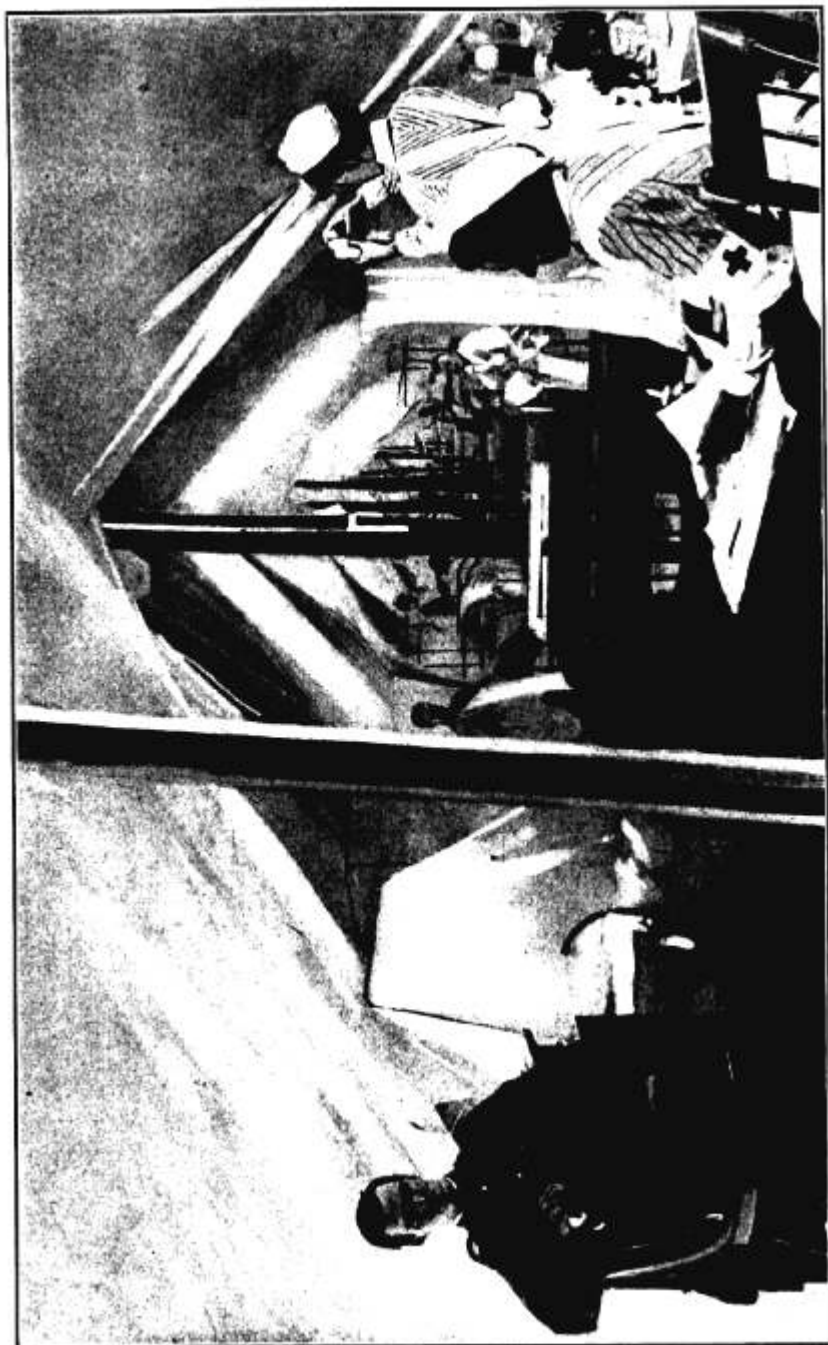
The close attention and elaborate care demanded by modern methods was given just as freely and skilfully to all of these men as if each nurse had only a single private patient to look after. The enclosed government fever chart will show how carefully the men were nursed. These did not come to us until I had been in camp about two weeks, and it required much labor for the nurses to go back over all their old charts and records to make these government charts out properly.

Record of Variations of Temperature beginning October 4, 1898, at Sternberg U.S. Hospital Chickamauga Park

NAME.		COMPANY.		REGIMENT.		NAT.		AGE.		DIAGNOSIS.											
										Typhoid Fever.											
Day of Month.																					
Time of Day.																					

Medical Officers are requested to exercise the greatest care and thoroughness in preparing clinical histories of medical and surgical cases for the purpose of obtaining reliable material for the medical and surgical history of the present war. Whenever possible the text should be illustrated by sketches, drawings, or photographs, which should accompany the clinical report. Should the writing space under any of the headings be insufficient to give the necessary information, this be supplied by an extra sheet of paper attached to the report and the place indicated where it belongs. The writing must be plain and in ink.

Accurate information on the effects of the modern bullet is especially desirable. In the study of this subject the probable range distance should be stated, the wounds of entrance and exit described, the track of the bullet marked on the outline figures of the "Surgical Report" and the bones, joints, and soft tissues carefully noted. The amount and character of hemorrhage and the degree of shock should be carefully estimated and accurately recorded. The remote results of shot wounds deserve a careful study and should be incorporated in the final report. On the termination of the case the report should be promptly made out and forwarded to the Surgeon General.



NO. 4. A SECTION OF TENTS FULL OF SICK SOLDIERS

A favorite walk, when the nurses had some "off duty," was to a cotton-field about a mile distant. The nurses, being from the North, had never seen a cotton-field white with the ripe balls, and it was, of course, a great curiosity, and each one plucked a branch to take home. Imagine our surprise and dismay at learning one day that we were ruining some poor man's cotton crop! It had not occurred to anyone that if one hundred and sixty-seven nurses should each go and help herself to a branch full of cotton-balls it would have any effect on the sum total of that particular cotton-patch. The owner, however, was not so dense. He, perhaps, had had his fields visited by Northern curiosity-hunters before, and he stationed several men in his patch to warn depredators away. It is needless to say that no more cotton was brought to camp to carry home. Every nurse was obliged to have a "pass" signed by our commanding officer when she went outside of the picket lines. These "passes" were made out quite formally: the bearer's name was written in, it was dated, and the length of time she was to be away was specified. The nurses never went without these passes, but the polite pickets would never look at them! They were so impressed by the nurses and their work for them or their fellows that when one of them appeared they presented arms or bowed, and she passed on. It was very funny to me. I used to wish, just for the sake of discipline, that a pass would some day be demanded, but such a thing never happened.

The long working hours, the unaccustomed heat, and the impure water told in time upon the nurses. The first day I arrived in camp one was sent home in the first stages of typhoid fever. We had after that some one or more than one always on the sick-list. If at all possible, they went home as soon as it was decided that they had "the fever," and had no accommodations or conveniences for nursing in the nurses' dormitories. We tried hard to keep them from being sick, feeling that it was wiser to send three home needlessly than to keep one in camp and have a long and perhaps fatal illness. I remember of two cases that left camp with high temperatures, and the next day they were better, and on reaching home felt well! The Third Auxiliary of the Red Cross of blessed memory had sent us a most judicious representative, and we tried to seek out those who were most fatigued and probably ready to break down, and these were sent by twos and threes, and later, when they could be spared, in larger groups, to Lookout Mountain, to the beautiful hotel there, and here they rested for two or three days or a week, the Third Auxiliary paying all their expenses while away. The nurses always came back refreshed and invigorated by their outing, with one or two exceptions, and these had, later, to be sent home, sick.

It was curious and interesting to see representatives of so many

training-schools working together. There was always much pride manifested in one's Alma Mater, and school badges were, of course, very much in evidence. Nothing would bring a nurse more quickly to a sense of her duties than to ask if in her training-school she had never been instructed as regards this or that. The different uniforms were also interesting; most of them were blue,—blue and white stripes, blue and white checks, blue and white plaid, plain blue,—but pink was not absent. There were with us nurses from ninety-one different schools, and but two wore pink uniforms. The caps were as diverse as the uniforms. Every kind of cap was to be seen, from a tiny square of lawn, to quite an imposing erection of starched linen and quilled ruffles. We had all kinds and forms. It seemed to me that the dainty "Red Cross" cap furnished by the Third Auxiliary was the most universally becoming.

Time and space fail me as I think of all the pleasant, if arduous, work of that autumn,—work that seemed so satisfactory, work that was so delightful to us because we realized, perhaps for the first time in our lives, that we were patriotic, that it was a joy to give of our best for our country, that for once she needed women in her extremity as well as men, and that of all her daughters we only were called to serve her.

Many incidents crowd to mind as I write, but this paper is already too long, and I must only mention the delightful evening when all the nurses were invited over to General Breckinridge's head-quarters to see the fancy firing of a Kentucky regiment just starting for home; the camp-fire, when some troubadours from a colored regiment came over and sang for us and afterwards danced some wonderful breakdances; the gradual thinning out of our hospital; the sending of nurses to other hospitals or to their homes; the oncoming of the cold weather and our efforts, not always successful, to keep warm.

The memory of those days will ever remain with me. The loyalty of the nurses, their obedience to orders, their patience when reprimanded, their anxiety to do their whole duty, their courtesy, and the friendships I have formed with some of them give me many happy hours in retrospect.

This is written with the hope that some of the chief nurses of the other hospitals will write of their experiences while in the army.

